DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 414 808 HE 030 701

AUTHOR	Zemsky, Robert, Ed.
TITLE	A Promise Worth Keeping.
INSTITUTION	Pew Higher Education Roundtable, Philadelphia, PA; Knight Collaborative, Akron, OH.; Pennsylvania Univ., Philadelphia. Inst. for Research on Higher Education.
SPONS AGENCY	James G. Irvine Foundation, San Francisco, CA.; Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia, PA.; Ford Foundation, New York, NY. Education and Research Div.
PUB DATE	1997-08-00
NOTE	12p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Policy Perspectives, Institute for Research on Higher Education, 4200 Pine St., 5A, Philadelphia, PA 19104-4090; phone: 1-800-437-9799.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Opinion Papers (120)
JOURNAL CIT	Policy Perspectives; v7 n3 Aug 1997
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Access to Education; Accountability; College Attendance; Demography; Economic Factors; *Educational Change; *Educational Finance; *Educational Policy; Financial Policy; *Higher Education; Paying for College; Productivity; Public Policy
IDENTIFIERS	*California; California Master Plan for Higher Education

ABSTRACT

This essay, based on a roundtable discussion held by institutional leaders, policymakers, and other citizens concerned with the vitality of the state's public and private colleges and universities, focuses on California's efforts to provide access to higher education and sustain quality in the face of a growing student body of adult and traditional-aged learners. It reviews the role of the 40-year-old California Master Plan for Higher Education in providing broad access to higher education in the state through the California community colleges system, the California State University system, and the University of California campuses. It notes that the economic downturn of the early 1990s and the wave of new students that will descend on higher education institutions in the next decade have created challenges to continued access for all qualified students. The essay maintains that California cannot hope to increase access to higher education without increased public funding, that higher education institutions need to become more efficient and focused, and that both the state and colleges and universities must become committed to increased access. (MDM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 414 808

August 1997
Volume 7
Number 3

P-O-L-I-C-Y

PERSPECTIVES

Supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts
and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

A Promise Worth Keeping

It was a promise made nearly 40 years ago: all Californians—newcomer as well as native, rich and poor, citizens of color on a par with those of European descent—were to have equal access to the state's rich mix of colleges and universities. They were to have the opportunity of a college education, provided they had the academic potential and personal motivation to succeed in the classroom. It was a promise that also paired quality with access. What California sought was a system of higher education comprising public and private institutions, world-class centers of quality instruction and research that would make the state a magnet for investment and a platform for the talented.

It was also this promise that we revisited as a roundtable of stakeholders united by a common interest in renewing California's historic commitment to broad public access and educational quality. Our January 1997 roundtable was composed of administrative leaders and trustees of California's public and private institutions of higher education, public officials responsible for charting California's educational course, and citizen-leaders searching for new ways to affirm the social compact among the state of California, its citizens, and its public and private institutions of higher education. The roundtable was jointly convened by the California Higher Education Policy Center and the Pew Higher Education Roundtable, and co-sponsored by the California Education Roundtable, RAND, the California Postsecondary Education Commission, and the California Citizens Commission on Higher Education. The roundtable was supported by funds provided by The James Irvine Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Ford Foundation, and the Institute for Research on Higher Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

The 1990s have taught that even in California there are limits, and that the keeping of promises means a more explicit addressing of the classic issues of who should pay, who should learn at public expense, and for what social benefits.

Demographic and economic changes in California through the past 30 years foretell many of the issues confronting other states and higher education institutions throughout the U.S. This essay focuses on the challenges of that state to sustain quality and meet a growing demand for access to higher education.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Univ of PA
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

IHE 0321 721

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A Just Celebration

Our discussions began with a celebration of the California Master Plan—that remarkable strategy that set the course for higher education across the state and, in many ways, across the nation. It was, and it remains, a particularly coherent vision of higher education as a public good, seeking an educational environment in which the state's community colleges, state colleges, and university campuses, through clearly differentiated missions, would serve different parts of the college-going population.

The California Community Colleges (CCC) became the base of the system, providing a starting point, a second chance to learners seeking postsecondary educations, and lifelong opportunities to enhance individual knowledge and skills. State colleges, subsequently recast as the California State University (CSU) system, provided broad entry to baccalaureate education, delivering to graduates the skills and training to become teachers, computer programmers, the managers of enterprises, the deliverers of social and governmental services, as well as candidates for post-baccalaureate education in the learned professions. The University of California (UC) campuses marked California's commitment to research and the kind of baccalaureate education that thrives in a research environment.

For public and private higher education, the message is the same: Do more with less. It is not just a clever slogan; it is now the basic fact of academic life in California.

Complementing these direct investments in public higher education were private colleges and universities that provided additional quality and diversity to the institutional mix, thus assuring students in California as wide a range of choice as any state in the Union. Access to this private sector was facilitated by a publicly funded state scholarship program called Cal Grant—a key element in the state's promise to keep the cost to the student purposefully low.

Those who best remember the development of the Master Plan understand it primarily as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. It was a way, given the political and demographic landscape of California in the 1960s, to move the state forward by promising to all high school graduates a substantial opportunity to better themselves and their communities, provided they were willing and able to learn. Called "a plan for people," it was a public strategy for orderly growth and advancement within well-defined institutional structures, serving the aspirations of the state and its citizens with remarkable success.

One of the more curious aspects of the original plan, however, was its lack of specificity about how the state might fund its broad commitment to access and quality. Instead there was a presumption of economic self-sufficiency—within the collective resources of the state, of local communities, and of individuals who sought a higher education—such that access and quality became, almost by definition, feasible and sustainable goals. Through the 1970s and much of the '80s, there was little reason to question that presumption. California led the nation in growth, in economic well-being, and, not so coincidentally, in the quality and breadth of its system of higher education. The 1990s have taught a different lesson: that even in California there are limits, and that the keeping of promises means a more explicit addressing of the classic issues of who should pay, who should learn at public expense, and for what social benefits.

It is this focus on a more circumscribed horizon, along with the realization that California's current generation of learners differs substantially from the population of students envisioned in the 1960s, that makes it necessary to reenvision the future of higher education across the state. We believe that the twin promises of access and quality at affordable prices must remain the stated purpose of public policy. Deciding how best to achieve that end, however, requires reflection and reconsideration. What we envision is a new understanding of capacities and possibilities, a willingness to experiment with alternative institutional arrangements, and a new set of alliances for realizing California's promise.

Although the UC matriculates undergraduates predominantly of the 18- to 24-year-old age bracket, the average age of learners at most community colleges and CSU campuses is now nearly 30, including growing numbers of both traditional-aged and adult students who balance schooling with employment and parenting.

Crucible—or Sunburn?

By any account, the economic downturn of the early 1990s was a "massive happening" that impacted all of the state's colleges and universities. The precipitous decline in economic activity and state revenues translated into a sense that no institution would again see a budget that addressed its needs or aspirations. What public higher education also learned was that it had lost its priority status. The state's colleges and universities came to bear their share of revenue reductions—and then some. Long-standing public discontent with government taxation and spending, solidified in Proposition 13, commingled with a sense that public higher education had become large and unwieldy, more a problem than a source of solution. In a 1993 survey conducted by the Public Agenda Foundation, 64 percent of those polled were sufficiently disillusioned to call for a fundamental overhaul of the state's system of higher education.

Given the intensity of these budgetary pressures and the public's unexpected criticism, what is remarkable is just how little fundamental change the heat of austerity produced. The "crucible" of the early 1990s may in fact have done little more than singe the outer layers of the onion, leaving intact all that California's higher education institutions—the traditional internal constituencies—value most. With the rebounding of the state's economy in more recent years, "normalcy" has returned to most institutions. Both within themselves and in their relation to one another, the three sectors of the state's public higher education system are functioning largely as before.

Not surprisingly, responses to the budgetary crises reflected the styles and agendas of the different sectors of higher education across the state. There was not a drawing together in search of ways to pool downsized public appropriations to determine how the state's higher education system could best serve the needs of the state and its citizens despite their newly limited resources. Instead, each sector and its institutions responded primarily in ways that preserved its own values and purposes—even at the expense of its external constituencies. For each sector, raising tuition was a first, not a final, option in a constrained resource environment. In some cases enrollments were reduced as well, resulting in an overall decline of 200,000 students. Public and private institutions became more entrepreneurial—more skilled at developing market niches and additional sources of revenue—but in all, there was less commitment to restructuring than one might have supposed.

California's institutions of higher education have shown a real capacity for self-preservation in times of adversity. Now, with the return of a more robust economy, has come the easing of state budgetary constraints along with a diminished need for escalating increases in student fees. Over the past two years, appropriations to public colleges and universities have increased by 17 percent in the aggregate, while student fees were frozen. There has been an increase in state funds for the Cal Grant program as well, though the ratio of student aid dollars to tuition charged is far below what it was a decade ago. The pressure of public opinion has also subsided. A follow-up to the earlier Public Agenda Foundation survey reports that the proportion of Californians indicating the need for a fundamental overhaul of public higher education had declined by 20 points to 44 percent of the state's adult population.

Squaring the Circle

The fly in the ointment, however, is indicated by two perspectives expressed in the follow-up poll that have yet to be fully felt in the political process. On two issues Californians were even more adamant than before: no more tuition increases, and no limiting of access to a higher education. Californians were, in effect, telling both their elected offi-

cials and those responsible for administering the state's colleges and universities, "We submitted once to your tuition and fee increases while facing our own financial hardships. Now you have enough resources to get the job done without making us pay more!" For public and private higher education, the message is the same: Do more with less. It is not just a clever slogan; it is now the basic fact of academic life in California.

The "more" of that dictum reflects higher education's changing demographics as well as an altered climate for public appropriation. Much has changed since 1960. The total number of students enrolled in California's colleges and universities, public and private, has increased from 262,000 in 1960 to 1.5 million in 1995. The census of institutions reflects much of this growth: 42 new community colleges; seven additional CSU campuses; three new UC campuses; 23 new accredited private colleges.

In the decade ahead, the state's colleges and universities will have to accommodate the tidal wave of students now engulfing the state's public primary and secondary schools. The number of students enrolled in public primary and secondary education increased from just over 4 million in 1981 to nearly 5.4 million in 1995.

The most fundamental change has come in the demographics of these campuses—more of everybody in general, and higher proportions of Asian and Pacific Rim populations in particular. Even more noticeable has been the advent of the adult learner in nearly every segment of the system. Forty years ago, if college students were not returning veterans, for the most part they were high school graduates who had proceeded directly to college. These were the students on whom California planners focused in the 1960s—learners who pursued their courses of study in preordained sequences and graduated in either two or four years, depending on the degree they sought.

Today, this traditional pipeline has been replaced by an often ill-defined educational swirl. Although the UC matriculates undergraduates predominantly of the 18- to 24-year-old age bracket, the average age of learners at most community colleges and CSU campuses is now nearly 30, including growing numbers of both traditional-aged and adult students who balance schooling with employment and parenting. Collectively they are part of that new majority of students seeking access to the system without particular concern for a concentrated, sequential learning experience from a prestigious "medallion" institution. Their tendency is rather to pursue and select higher education experiences "one course at a time," often from more than one institution, even as they pursue a degree or other formal credential. The greatest increase in demand for higher education is now within the nonmedallion market, from Californians at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum.

This emerging new majority of postsecondary students was hardly imagined in 1960 when California set forth its comprehensive strategy to fulfill the promise of broad access to quality educational experiences. Does that promise extend as well to part-time adult learners? Are the institutions that serve these students entitled to funding on an equal basis with those campuses that serve full-time, traditional-aged, rite-of-passage students? Should the same rules apply when considering these students for financial aid? For admission? For transfer credit?

The answering of these questions is made more complex by a second demographic force now looming before California higher education. In the decade ahead, the state's colleges and universities will have to accommodate the tidal wave of students now engulfing the state's public primary and secondary schools. The number of students enrolled in public primary and secondary education increased from just over 4 million in 1981 to nearly 5.4 million in 1995. Much of that increase has been from historically underrepresented populations: a 50 percent increase in the number of Hispanics and Latinos, and a 51 percent increase in Asian and Pacific Rim students.

The stakes are considerable for California's colleges and universities. The general consensus emerging from different sets of projections is that the demand for higher education will likely increase by upwards of a half-million students by the year 2005. There continues to be disagreement regarding when this demographic wave will crest—and whether the phenomenon will in fact be a crest or a sustained influx of additional demand for higher education.

In considering the consequences of this tidal flow of new and different students into higher education, we have adopted a more complex understanding of the meaning of access in modern America. A primary purpose of any system of higher education is to perform an accelerating function for individual aspiration; K-12 institutions, by contrast, perform an enabling function, providing their students with basic learning skills, advancing them to the point at which it becomes possible to accelerate their individual ambitions through a higher education.

Outsiders frequently comment on the quality gap separating the state's two basic systems of education. Although California has created one of the nation's finest systems of higher education in terms of both quality and access, it has allowed its K-12 system to remain undistinguished and even mediocre. Of the 50 states and Washington, D.C., California ranks 42nd in its spending per K-12 pupil, 51st in the ratio of students per teacher, 43rd in spending on K-12 education per $1,000 of income. In 1994, only 18 percent of California's fourth-graders scored at or above reading proficiency level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests. In 1992, only 20 percent of California's eighth-graders scored at or above math proficiency level on the NAEP tests. California's public high school graduation rate is 66 percent—ranking 39th of the 50 states and Washington, D.C. The implication is that California will support educational acceleration for those who have succeeded in enabling *themselves* through the existing K-12 system. For those who fail in these years to cross the threshold of enablement, however, neither the state nor its system of higher education exhibits substantial concern.

Without an investment in the prospects of students in California's K-12 system, an even smaller proportion will benefit from the acceleration a higher education provides. The consigning of so many Californians, first as students and later as workers, to a future of limited horizons will undermine both their own well-being and the collective vitality of the state. Ultimately, the failure to address fully the educational needs of these citizens will jeopardize the conviction that public higher education belongs to the people as a whole and not just to the few who can attend.

For institutions of higher education to become agents of educational reform entails a change in disposition as well as focus. It means exchanging the mirror of self-absorption for the lens of societal commitment, concentrating less on internal sustenance and advantage and more on fulfilling the learning and productive potential of the state and its citizens.

We believe that the responsibility for averting that future falls not just on the state and its citizens but on California's system of higher education as well. Each of the sectors (the University of California, the California State University, the California Community Colleges, and the independent colleges and universities) has an obligation to help establish a truly accomplished, nationally recognized system of primary and secondary education across the state—one no less successful than California's rich system of higher education. Promising steps in this direction can be seen in the University of California's Outreach Task Force, a group that is drawing together efforts and funding commitments from all sectors of higher education, business, and state government for the enhancement of K-12 education; in the Subject Matter projects to help create a more skilled teaching force; and in the standards projects of the Education Roundtable and the California Department of Education. Given the size of the cohort

now enrolled in the K-12 system, efforts such as these must be enhanced.

The challenge of access, then, is more than the opening of doors, though that too remains important, particularly if keeping those doors open includes keeping a college education within the economic grasp of all California citizens. To take up this challenge requires a shift in the allocation of resources and rewards within the state. An equal challenge, however, is for institutions of higher education to become agents of educational reform. Embracing this agency function entails a change in disposition as well as focus. It means exchanging the mirror of self-absorption for the lens of societal commitment, concentrating less on internal sustenance and advantage and more on fulfilling the learning and productive potential of the state and its citizens.

We believe, moreover, that such an agency role is in full keeping with the best traditions of California higher education. Californians have long celebrated the part that research in general and its research universities in particular have played in making their state both productive and prosperous. Much of that celebration grows out of an appreciation for the very tangible contributions the state's land-grant institutions, their research labs, field stations, and extension services have made to agriculture—whether in the form of new products, improved methods of cultivation and fertilization, or better systems of irrigation and flood control. As the nature of work and locus of employment have shifted, the focus of land-grant institutions in California as elsewhere has also changed. The original compact between land-grant institutions and the farmers they first served has been expanded to include society more generally. What public funding in these settings has come to purchase is a more inclusive compact in which the university pledges to provide knowledge and services that will demonstrably enhance the well-being of the state itself.

It is this principle that ought to be applied to the challenge of reforming primary and secondary education across California. California's institutions of higher education owe the citizens of the state a fair opportunity to succeed on their own terms—by providing access and, just as important, by investing their own energies and resources in the revitalization of the state's primary and secondary schools. Although the nature of such investments can vary, as a minimum they ought to include the provision of a more skilled teaching force, the setting and enforcement of educational standards, and a shared commitment to alternate arrangements for linking schools and colleges as full and equal partners.

If resources are no longer in sufficient supply to support all functions equally well, policy decisions must determine whether to pursue all objectives in the same degree as before, and whether to allow private revenue to support larger shares of their costs.

Overcoming Impediments

Taking on this challenge is not just a matter of will, but of organizational structure and institutional process as well. What will be required, in fact, is a frank reconsideration of the way in which individual institutions and their faculties make decisions and public commitments—and ultimately how these institutions choose to govern themselves. Historically, the autonomy and independence granted to the state's colleges and universities has affirmed the ideal of collegial dialogue and well-reasoned debate in reaching collective decisions within an institution's academic community. More recently, however, the traditional concept of shared governance as it relates to tenured faculty participation in decision making has too often deteriorated into a system in which fear and the absence of trust cause decisions to be prolonged and averted as faculty members exercise what many come to consider as a personal power of veto. In such cases, the result is a college or university that cannot summon the kind of institutional resolve and energy required to connect with the larger world the institution seeks to serve.

There is a parallel imperative for developing a greater sense of collective purpose and action among the various sectors of higher education. Currently, the mission and structure of a public institution is more often a function of the sector to which it belongs than of the characteristics of the region it inhabits or the learning needs of the students it has come to serve. The strong lines of demarcation separating private from public higher education and, within the latter, differentiating the three public sectors from one another are themselves part of a larger disconnect between the state's objectives and institutional aspirations.

Increasingly, in California as in the rest of the nation, there has emerged a remarkably singular definition of academic excellence as best exemplified by the research university. The dividing of all public higher education in California into three stacked tiers has helped reinforce a gold standard that equates educational quality with selective admissions and the presence of graduate research programs. The self-fulfilling result is a disposition to focus on inputs rather than outcomes, and a skewing of the aspirations of institutions and their faculties toward the research model, regardless of the societal need, the kinds of students enrolled, or the resources available for such a mission.

What becomes skewed as well are the rewards and incentives available to help guide and structure a public system of higher education. More than one observer has noted that community colleges, responsible for educating the greatest number of students, receive the smallest share of state funding per student, while research campuses, which maintain the most selective admissions and attract students predominantly from families of middle- and upper-middle-class income, receive the greatest share of state funding per student. Looking at these distributions in themselves gives rise to criticisms that the state's system of higher education, which was designed to ensure access, serves ultimately to control access—and that the funds expended for higher education in California do more to create and enforce a status system than to foster individual opportunity for the majority of the state's citizens.

The fact is that access, enabling as well as accelerating, has not been the state's only objective in funding a higher education system. All too often the state's funding and reward system is not aligned with the stated objectives of promoting access. On this matter the state has in effect told colleges and universities to go left while paying them to go right. Not surprisingly, the disposition of California's public colleges and universities has been to tell the state: "We'll do as you pay, not what you say."

The Master Plan envisioned a higher education environment for California characterized by a range of objectives, including access, affordability, choice, and preeminent research environments. From the beginning the state was expected to be the chief fiscal agent for these ambitions, for both the operations and capital outlay of public higher education. The fact that the state cannot continue to support the full range of delivery on all these objectives makes clear the need for a reexamination of the relationship between public policy and public finance. If resources are no longer in sufficient supply to support all functions equally well, policy decisions must determine whether to pursue all objectives in the same degree as before, and whether to allow private revenue to support larger shares of their costs. Since it is not likely that a pure market solution would support all public functions in a balanced manner that fulfills highest priority social needs, what is required is a discussion of the tradeoffs among the different objectives that institutions of higher education in California help to fulfill. For each of these objectives, the fundamental questions must be asked: Who pays? Who benefits? Who should pay in what proportion?

To keep the promise of access to a quality college education for a population that is growing larger and more diverse in its needs and aspirations will involve policies not just about institutions but about individual students and functions.

We believe that overcoming the impediments to change ought to stem from three premises. First, California cannot hope to increase access to higher education for its citizens without some increase in the dollars it accords for this purpose. There must be within the state a greater willingness to align public intentions with resource allocation. Second, California's institutions of higher education have an equal responsibility to enhance access through the achievement of greater efficiencies and a greater concentration of resources on the needs of the constituencies they serve. Third, institutions cannot suppose that either the state or its citizens will simply augment funds for the objective of increased access without institutions taking comparable measures to advance this purpose within their own cultures and settings. When the bill arrives, the responsibility for paying it must be shared.

The rising tide of primary and secondary students gives particular poignancy to the discussion of access to higher education in California. To keep the promise of access to a quality college education for a population that is growing larger and more diverse in its needs and aspirations will involve policies not just about institutions but about individual students and functions. Paying for the goal of educational access has traditionally involved a balance between funds accorded to specific functions, funds to individual institutions, and funds to individuals in the form of financial aid. We do not propose a recasting of the state support that currently exists among these three types of funding or a major inquiry into the cross-subsidies that currently exist within the economy of the state's higher education system. We propose that the real focus must be on the revenues coming into institutions—that any *new* funds beyond the amounts currently accorded to higher education institutions be in support of an explicit agenda to enhance access to California's present and future population of learners. For public institutions, these new funds would include both additional state appropriation and the dollars realized through the increases in student fees. For private institutions, new funds would denote any additional dollars committed to the Cal Grant program, which accords students the option of attending a private institution.

In a general way, there must be a discussion of how the state's higher education system is using the resources it receives as an agent in promoting the well-being of California and its citizens. One way of enhancing the agency function of California's colleges and universities is to insist that any increase in student fees be linked both to measures of student affordability and to measures of institutional accountability in fulfilling the promise of access.

We believe it is important to continue discussion of these matters, which will define the horizon of opportunity that California and its citizens confront, now and in the future. We think it is imperative that the state, its citizens, and its private and public higher education institutions address together the questions of how California will fulfill its promise of access to individual opportunity and the fostering of a society characterized by justice, fairness, and productivity. The experience of the past five years has shown that when confronted with dramatic reductions in resources, self-preservation is the first response. To continue this disposition is to ensure that a substantial proportion of the state's residents never cross the threshold that leads from failure and disaffection to individual fulfillment and productive life as citizen and worker.

Advancing the Dialogue

Rather than engage in finger-pointing or—at the other extreme—in recasting the state's system of higher education from the bottom up, we believe it is time to focus policy discussions on how California can most effectively address the challenge of increased demand for higher education, using the institutional resources, structures, and human energies that currently constitute the state's system of higher education. An abdication of leadership or failure to achieve common resolve on this issue will create a California in which all individual and collective vitality is compromised by a substantial population that remains excluded from the opportunity that higher education provides.

We believe that policy discussions should center around a set of well-focused questions:

- What tradeoffs should inform the state's allocation of funds for the range of social objectives fulfilled by institutions of higher education in California? Who benefits from each particular objective, and who should pay?

- By what means can California's colleges and universities come to play a more direct role as agents of educational revitalization? How can the different sectors and institutions develop more effective partnerships for meeting shared objectives? How can individual institutions work within the current structure to develop programs that serve specific regional needs in more effective ways?

- How can the state's higher education institutions work more productively with its K-12 institutions to ensure that a greater share of the state's young people attain the educational foundation in their early years that enables them to benefit from the educational acceleration that higher education institutions provide?

- In promoting the objective of access to opportunity through higher education, what balance should exist among the funds accorded to individual functions, individual institutions, and individual learners? What principles should shape the determination of state funds to accord students a greater measure of choice between public and private institutions?

- How can both the state's three-tiered system of public higher education and its full complement of private colleges and universities develop shared agendas as well as evolve new, more efficient, and timely ways of making internal decisions?

As in the discussions of four decades ago, what is required now is a sense of strategy in pursuit of principle, rather than a search for either organizational neatness or structural harmony. What is required first is a reaffirmation of ends—in this case a clear and compelling statement of the importance of access for both individuals and the state as a whole. The discussion of means that follows must necessarily be free and open, cognizant that much of what has worked in the past will succeed in the future, while accepting of the notion that changed circumstances often call for innovative solutions.

"A Promise Worth Keeping" is based on a January 1997 roundtable discussion that consisted of administrative leaders and trustees of California's public and private institutions of higher education, public officials responsible for charting California's educational course, and citizen-leaders searching for new ways to affirm the social compact among the state of California, its citizens, and its public and private institutions of higher education. The roundtable was jointly convened by the California Higher Education Policy Center and the Pew Higher Education Roundtable, and co-sponsored by the California Education Roundtable, RAND, the California Postsecondary Education Commission, and the California Citizens Commission on Higher Education. The roundtable was supported by funds provided by The James Irvine Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Ford Foundation, and the Institute for Research on Higher Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

The following individuals participated in that discussion and helped to shape the resulting essay:

Robert Atwell
President Emeritus
American Council on Education

Nancy Bekavac
President
Scripps College

Dominic Brewer
Economist
Institute on Education and Training
RAND

Roy T. Brophy
Regent
University of California

Patrick M. Callan
Executive Director
The California Higher Education Policy Center

Martha Fallgatter
Chairman, Board of Trustees
California State University

Joni Finney
Associate Director
The California Higher Education Policy Center

Warren Halsey Fox
Executive Director
California Postsecondary Education Commission

Walter B. Gerken
Chairman of the Equity Board
PIMCO Advisors

Charles Goldman
Economist
Institute on Education and Training
RAND

John Immerwahr
Senior Research Fellow
Public Agenda Foundation

C. Judson King
Provost and Senior Vice President, Academic Affairs
University of California

Robert Laffoon-Villegas
Director of Research and Communications
California Citizens Commission on Higher Education

Jeff Marston
Chair
California Postsecondary Education Commission

William J. Moore
Chair
Higher Education Policy Institute

Barry Munitz
Chancellor
California State University

Thomas Nussbaum
Chancellor
California Community Colleges

John C. Petersen
Retired Executive Director
Accrediting Commission for California Community and Junior Colleges

Alice Petrossian
President, Board of Governors
California Community Colleges

William Pickens
Director
California Citizens Commission on Higher Education

Peter Schrag
Contributing Editor
Sacramento Bee

Virginia B. Smith
Vice-Chair
Higher Education Policy Institute

Jean Smith
Chair, Board of Trustees
Scripps College

Gregory R. Wegner
Associate Director
Institute for Research on Higher Education
University of Pennsylvania

Harold Williams
President and CEO
The J. Paul Getty Trust

Robert Zemsky
Professor and Director
Institute for Research on Higher Education
University of Pennsylvania

Signe Wilkinson

Policy Perspectives is a publication of the Pew Higher Education Roundtable and the Knight Collaborative.

Robert Zemsky
Senior Editor

James F. Galbally, Jr.
Contributing Editor

Ann J. Duffield
Director of Communications

Joan S. Girgus
Contributing Editor

Gregory R. Wegner
Managing Editor

William F. Massy
Contributing Editor

Inquiries should be directed to ***Policy Perspectives***, Institute for Research on Higher Education, 4200 Pine Street, 5A, Philadelphia, PA 19104-4090, or call the Education Line, 1-800-437-9799. The Roundtable can also be reached by e-mail at: pp-requests@irhe.upenn.edu
Visit our Web site at: www.irhe.upenn.edu/pp/pp-main.html

Copyright ©1997 by the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved.